DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 365 463 PS 022 014

AUTHOR Mardell, Benjamin
TITLE "And We Told Wonderful Stories Also": Reflections on a Preschool Language Game To Promote Narrative Development.
PUB DATE [91]
NOTE 56p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Case Studies; Educational Games; *Narration; *Preschool Children; Preschool Education; Problem Solving; Program Evaluation; Puppetry; *Story Telling; Teaching Methods; *Verbal Development
IDENTIFIERS *Story Telling by Children

ABSTRACT

Using a teacher-researcher perspective, a study assessed a preschool storytelling program designed to promote children's narrative development. The program included workshops, child-teacher conferences, and adult and child performances. A preschool class of 17 four-year-olds listened to adult-told stories, rehearsed their own stories with a teacher, and then performed their stories before the entire class. In-depth case studies of 4 of the 17 pupils' background, stories, and performances suggested: (1) the importance of establishing a shared focus on problem-solving to further children's narrative ability; (2) the usefulness of adult models of performance in both motivating children's participation and furthering their narrative abilities; and (3) the utility of puppets in furthering preschoolers' storytelling. An appendix explains the coding system used to evaluate the children's stories. Contains 28 references. (MDM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 365 463

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"And We Told Wonderful Stories Also": Reflections on a Preschool Language Game to Promote Narrative Development

Benjamin Mardell

Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study

Tufts University

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Benjamin Mardell

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

PS 022014

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"And we told wonderful stories also": Reflections on a preschool language game to promote narrative development.

Benjamin Mardell

The present research report describes the operations of a storytelling program in a four-year-old classroom. The program, involving children listening to adult stories, rehearsing their stories with a teacher, and then performing their stories to the entire class, is aimed at promoting children's narrative development. The research is conducted from a teacher-researcher perspective. From a class of seventeen, the cases of four children are examined through the lens of the sociocultural perspective (Rogoff, 1990). The examination yields suggestions for structuring and implementing classroom language activities. Suggestions include: 1) the importance of establishing intersubjectivity (a shared focus on problem solving) to furthering children's narrative development; 2) the usefulness of adult models's of performance in both motivating children's participation and furthering their narrative abilities; and 3) the utility of puppets in furthering preschooler's storytelling.

INTRODUCTION: THE STORYTELLER PROGRAM

On a sunny June morning, at large group meeting during the last week of school, I asked the seventeen children who had been under my charge since September to reflect on their experiences in the four-year-old class. Children raised their hands with ideas, and we generated a list of favorite activities and significant accomplishments. Towards the end of the discussion red headed Kathleen raised her hand and declared "and we told wonderful stories also."

The present paper is an analysis of the program where Kathleen and her classmates told their wonderful stories. The program, a "language game"[1] to promote the narrative skills of preschoolers, included: workshops (large group mini-lessons held each Monday where aspects of storytelling were discussed and children signed up to tell one story during the week); child-teacher conferences (where, on their day to tell a story children would meet with a teacher to plan their performance); child performances (where children would tell their stories in a variety of medium to the class); and adult performances.

The language game emerged from a convolution of circumstances.

---

[1] The metaphor of language games is used to describe playful classroom activities which facilitate narrative development. Language games involve a teacher and one or more children who, through repeated play, learn the expectations and rules of an activity. The rules of langauge games focus participants' attention on the form (as opposed to the communicative function) of spoken exchange. I borrow the term from McCabe (1987) who credits Wittegenstein. Wittegenstein saw language as governed by rules regarding participation in various discourse contexts. In this sense as well, storytelling is a language game.

Briefly, the school year began with a daily story time where I told the children both original puppet stories and traditional folk tales. Some time in October, to help integrate a particularly shy child into the group, I told a "special story" which the shy child had dictated. Other children clamored for the opportunity to have their stories told at story time, and being the "special storyteller" soon became a coveted classroom experience. By November story time had been transformed to include both adult and child told tales. The storyteller program was up and running.[2]

Early on my "teacher sense" was that there was something of interest occurring in the classroom. The children were engaged in storytelling, with everyone wanting to tell their stories to the group. The interest in storytelling was, based on my familiarity with four-year-olds, sustained for much longer than expected. Moreover, there were "magical" moments during the children's performances. Such moments included the novice storytellers capturing their audience's attention with a humorous remark, a dramatic gesture, or a suspenseful story line. In an important sense storytelling is a problem solving activity of translating knowing into telling (Hudson and Shapiro, 1991). The program seemed

---

[2] The storyteller program operated in a class which met five day a week for two and a half hour a day. The classroom was developmentally based and located in a university laboratory school. The room was staffed by three adults: a head teacher, an assistant teacher, and a prepracticum student teacher. All the children came from middle class homes. One child was Indian, one was Bermudian, and one was African-American. The remainder were White. Two special needs children were mainstreamed into the class: one with motoric delays and visual impairment, and one with Down's Syndrome.

to facilitate solutions, proving to be fertile ground for what Eleanor Duckworth (1987) calls "the having of wonderful ideas."

It was my teacher sense which spurred my effort to document the storyteller program. The classroom became a naturalistic laboratory in which to study the children's storytelling. I video taped some of the children's story performances, saved many of their dictated stories, and kept a journal about my role in the program. These records have allowed me to return to the storyteller program, reflecting on it as a teacher-researcher.

The present article is a scholarly examination of the storyteller program. The examination focuses on my role in structuring and implementing the language game. Specifically, two applied research questions are addressed. First, what logistics of the language game worked well in promoting children's participation and facilitating their narrative development. Second, how did my interactions with the children seem to influence their development within the program. The second question is asked with an eye towards generating ideas of how teachers can best work with individual children when playing language games.

Answers to these questions are furnished in the following three part report. Part One provides theoretical frameworks which explain: a) the developmental sequence of preschoolers' narrative capabilities; and b) the social context of preschoolers' narrative development. Part Two presents the data: case studies of four children's experiences in the storyteller program. These case studies include analyses that document the development of the

children's storytelling capabilities, as well as information about child-teacher interactions during the storyteller program. Part Three draws conclusions, providing information that will inform future efforts to promote narrative development through classroom language games.

PART ONE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Part One examines two literatures. The first literature charts the developmental sequela of narrative in the preschool years, providing a framework for examining the children's stories. The second literature surveys the social context of preschoolers' narrative development, providing a framework for conceptualizing the role of adults within the storyteller program. Both literatures are utilized in describing children's participation in the storyteller program (Part Two), and in formulating recomendations on the structuring and implementing of langauge games (Part Three).

The Developmental Sequela of Narrative in the Preschool Years

Children begin telling narratives around two years of age (Sachs, 1983). These earliest narratives consist of short references to events from the immediate past such as "ball gone." Yet by the time they enter school, many children are telling lengthy, coherent, and cohesive stories. The transformation in storytelling between two and six, the developmental sequela of narrative in the preschool years, is sketched in the present section.

One of the most apparent changes in narratives during the preschool years is that stories get longer. Such is the case with spontaneous narratives told in classrooms (Umiker-Sebeok, 1979),

elicited personal narratives (Peterson and McCabe, 1983), and elicited fictional stories (Applebee, 1978; Sutton-Smith, 1986). Increased length in young children's narratives signals structural development, allowing for more possibilities in narratives. The result is increased narrative sophistication, both on a microstructural and macrostructural level.

Microstructure refers to the constituent parts of a narrative; the brush strokes, so to speak, of a story. There are numerous ways of looking at story microstructure. One of the most popular was devised by Labov (1972), who classified each independent clause in a narrative into one of five categories.[3] What components children use provide an interesting look at how they tell their stories.

How children handle the use of microstructural elements in their stories changes during the preschool years. First, children's command of orientative information improves. As children mature they provide more orientation, telling a more complete version of the who, what, where, and why of their stories. Umiker-Sebeok (1979) noted that in spontaneous narratives in classrooms only 16% of the three-year-olds' narrations had any orientative information. One hundred percent of the five-year-olds narrations had at least one orientative comment. It seems that as children grow older, their sensitivity to their listeners' need for orientative information increases.

Additionally, the use of appendages (abstracts, attention-getters, prologues, and codas) increase during the preschool years. Applebee (1978) found that in a sample of 120 fictional narratives

---

[3] Labov's coding system in described in Appendix I.

the use of formal beginnings steadily increased between two and five (30% at two; 43% at three; 77% at four; and 87% at five). Similar increases were found in the use of formal endings (0% at two; 13% at three; 13% at four; and 46% at five). Again, as children grow older they become more sensitive to their listeners' needs, clearly signaling the beginnings and endings of their stories.

Macrostructure refers to the overall organization of a narrative. The macrostructural organization provides the framework which make stories coherent to listeners. Linguists debate which characteristics account for a coherent story, and how to define increased complexity in story macrostructure. The systems that they have created represent alternate lenses to view narratives. That the canonical form of narration is a cultural artifact complicates the linguist's task. However, there are systems that successfully chart macrostructure development in preschoolers.

One such system, devised by Peterson and McCabe (1983), is high point analysis. High point analysis begins by breaking narratives into their constituent parts as defined by Labov (1972). Based on the placement of constituent parts, stories are then classified into one of eight catagories.[4]

In looking at elicited personal narratives of four, five and six year-old children with high point analysis, Peterson and McCabe (1983) found two related changes in narrative macrostructure during the preschool years. First, children's command of sequencing

---

[4] Peterson and McCabes coding system is described in Appendix I.

improved. With four-year-olds, the most common type of story were leap-frogs (29%), where the narrator jumped from event to event unsystematically, leaving out important details. By five leap-frogs had almost disappeared (4%), and the majority of stories told were temporally sequenced. Second, children's stories begin to become organized around a narrative high point. At four only 14% of children's stories suggest such organization. At five the percentage was 50%, and by six 58% of stories included a high point. Further, by six children were better able to move beyond the high point and present some resolution to their stories (38% compared to 21% at five and 12% at four). It seems that as children get older, they learn what is important in a story (in mainstream American culture having a point), and developing the abilities (the planning skills and memory) necessary to craft such stories.

An awareness of the developmental sequela of narrative is useful for those implementing language games, providing part of a framework for listening to children's stories. This framework is utilized when examining the children's stories in Part Two.

The Social Context of Narrative Development

The development of preschoolers' narrative capabilities does not occur in isolation. Rather, it is facilitated in a number of important ways by children's interactions with more experienced storytellers (both adults and older children). The sociocultural perspective provides a framework for understanding the social context of children's narrative development by explaining how children's development is facilitated through active participation

in their culture (Vygotsky, 1978; Rogoff, 1990; Wertsch, 1991). In association with their caregivers children learn and extend the skills, values, and knowledge of their community, undergoing what is best described as "apprenticeship in thinking" (Rogoff, 1990).

An essential feature of their apprenticeship is **children's observation of adult activities**. The opportunity to observe tasks in their complexity and wholeness reveals important information about domains of knowledge (Rogoff, 1990). Observations of adults working can also heighten children's disposition to engage in activities.

Equally important in their apprenticeship is the opportunity for children to work on tasks in conjunction with adults. During such interactions, or **joint problem solving**, children are involved in activities they have only partially mastered. Their adult partners challenge, constrain, and support children's learning by establishing routines, breaking tasks into subgoals, and gradually transferring responsibilities for tasks to children (Rogoff, 1990). For example, an adult may direct a child's hand as she attempts to throw a ball, or ask leading questions as she tries to tell a story. In both instances the child's independent functioning is advanced through social interaction with more experienced partners. However, the success of joint problem solving is dependent on the establishment of **intersubjectivity**. Intersubjectivity involves the adult and child achieving a common understanding concerning the nature of their collaboration (Wertsch, 1984). The establishment of intersubjectivity is a dynamic process, involving mutual adjustment

by adult and child. It is only when intersubjectivity is achieved that adults can help children bridge between the known and the new.

It is important to note that while the general features supporting children's development appear to be universal, there are cultural variations in the specific details of children's apprenticeships. These apprenticeships are shaped by cultural goals, technologies, and institutions. Differences in these factors result in differences in children's apprenticeships, and are reflected in cultural variation in thinking (Rogoff, 1990).

In the domain of narrative development, it is clear that children learn a great deal from the opportunity to hear adults tell stories. Both Heath (1983) and Miller and Moore (1989) have documented the rich narrative environments in which children are raised. From birth young children are surrounded by stories: some of which are told to them; some of which are told about them; and some of which are simply told in their presence. These stories provide children with models of how to narrate, and with the sense that the telling of stories is a valued activity.

Further, adults facilitate children's narrative development through joint problem solving. For example, some parents aid their children's narrative development by establishing times to discuss the events of the day (e.g., dinner time conversations). During such periods these parents, by asking leading questions, focus children's attention on important aspects of storytelling (e.g., asking "what happened next" highlights sequencing). Over time these parents give their children more and more responsibility for constructing their

stories. McCabe and Peterson (1991) detail the importance of joint problem solving in narrative development, linking parents' story elicitation styles to their children's narrative capabilities. They found that the children whose parents extensively and repeatedly engaged them in creating narratives as toddlers were better storytellers as preschoolers.

As would be expected, the type of adult stories that children hear, and the nature of the joint problem solving that children are involved in varies among cultures. Cultural differences in the types of stories that children hear have been documented. While the storytelling of some cultures involves much boasting and hyperbole, the storytelling of other cultures is restricted to the faithful retelling of factual events (Heath, 1983). Variations in storytelling style extends into the realm of narrative structure; the appropriate way to structure stories being a cultural artifact (Scollon and Scollon, 1981).

Cultural differences in joint problem solving have been found along several dimensions. Blum-Kulka and Snow (1992) found variation in the amount of assistance and the degree of independence given children during dinner time conversations in working-class American, middle-class American, and middle-class Israeli homes. Minami and McCabe (1991a) report differences in the length of time children are given the floor during mother-child conversations in Canadian and Japanese homes. While Canadian mothers both tolerate and even encourage their children to take lengthy turns (asking many extending questions), Japanese mothers regularly cap the length of

their children's turns at three utterances. Minami and McCabe (1991b) relate the Japanese style of joint problem solving to the cultural aesthetic of haiku (poetry with strict length limitations), and the value of omoiyari (empathy, which is express in part through implicit, nonverbal, intuitive communications).

Thus children from different cultures come to tell stories in different ways. These differences include variation in the structural characteristics of their narratives. Distinctive structural patterns have been detailed for African-American (Rodino, Gimbert, Perez, and McCabe, 1991), Hispanic-American (Rodino, et. al., 1991), European-American (Peterson and McCabe, 1983), and Japanese children (Minami and McCabe, 1991b). These structural differences include variation in the use of sequencing (Rodino, et. al, 1991), the amount of orientative and descriptive information given (Minami and McCabe, 1991a), the amount of evaluation given (Rodino, et. al., 1991), and the use of single versus multiple settings (Gee, 1989).

The sociocultural perspective provides a framework for understanding the social dimension of narrative development. The perspective is thus useful in conceptualizing the teacher's role in facilitating children's learning within language games.

PART TWO: CASE STUDIES OF FOUR STORYTELLERS

Part Two presents the data: case studies of four children's experiences in the storyteller program. The case studies feature: a) background information on each child; b) information about how children interacted with teachers as they rehearsed and told their

stories; and c0 descriptions of the change in chidlren's storytelling capabilities over the course of the program. Part Two begins with a discussion of the methods employed in the current research.

Methods

Data Collection

Three types of data were collected on the four children profiled below. First, texts of children's story performances (from October through May) were obtained. Texts were transcribed from periodic audio and video recordings of the children's performances, and gleaned from stories dictated to the teachers by the children. In all, 37 texts were collected.

Second, information about child-teacher interactions were taken from the video recordings of the performances, from journal notes detailing child-teacher conferences, and from recollections about the four children. Recordings of 11 performances were available. Third, background information on the children was gleaned journal notes, progress reports, and other sources available because of my teacher status (e.g., conversations with parents).

Data Analysis

Data analyses include descriptions of the children's storytelling capabilities as well as contextual information regarding children's participation in the storyteller program. The end results are the four case studies presented below.

Specifically, the case studies begin with background information on each child. Such information includes factual details (age,

ethnicity, and birth order) as well as descriptions of children's participation in school.

The case studies continue with descriptions of the nature of child-teacher interactions in the storyteller program. Based on reviews of the video recordings, journal notes, and recollections, the descriptions summarize the global quality of interactions during the conferences and performances. The descriptions highlight the level of receptivity or resistance children showed towards teacher's suggestions, and amount of initiative children took in planning and performing their stories. Children's engagement with the program, based on participation rates,[5] is also noted.

The case studies conclude with a textual analysis of children's stories which includes quantitative analyses of length, microstructure, and macrostructure. To highlight change in the children's storytelling capabilities the texts are grouped into stories from the first half of the program (October through January), and stories from the second half of the program (February through May).

Narrative length is computed by counting independent clauses (Peterson and McCabe, 1983). Because media may influence story length, the average length from each medium (along with the overall average) is reported.

Narrative microstructure is described using Labov's (1972)

---

[5] Participation rates were based on fourteen weeks of records kept between January and May. Since telling a story was optional, participation rates are a measure of children's engagement in the program. Participation rates ranged from 100% to 59%, with a mean of 89%.

categories. Each child's use of appendages (measured by the percentage of stories with an abstract and the percentage of stories with a coda), and orientation (measured by the percentage of stories with at least one orientative clause and the percentage of clauses with an orientative component) is reported. Children's use of appendages and orientation in the first and last half of the program are compared (see Appendix I for a description of Labov's coding system).

Narrative macrostructure is described using two systems. High point analysis (Peterson and McCabe, 1983) is used to rate the bulk of the stories. Changes in story structure from the first to the last half of the program are highlighted. Stories which do not fit readily into the categories of high point analysis (e.g., the longer puppet performances) are displayed utilizing stanza analysis (Gee, 1991). Stanza analysis, which divides stories into hierarchical units of organization (lines, stanzas, and parts), has proven useful in making sense of stories which do not fit typical (used in an ethnocentric sense) patterns (see Appendix I for descriptions of the macrostructural coding systems employed).

Reliability Checks

Reliability checks are employed to guard against bias in coding, and to insure that coding categories are defined precisely. The Cohen's kappa (Bakeman and Gottman, 1986), a reliability check which statistically adjusts for chance agreements, was computed for story length, microstructure categories, and macrostructure classification (high point analysis only). The rates were .96, .97, and .78

respectively.

Concerning the assessments of child-teacher interactions, ratings were checked against the impressions of the assistant teacher (who was unaware of the nature of the present investigation). The ratings were in almost complete agreement.

Case Studies

The four children profiled below were chosen because they represent a diversity of experiences in the storyteller program. Through a preliminary analysis of change in the average length of stories between the first and last half of the program (thought to be indicative of development of storytelling capabilities) I sorted the children into two groups: those whose story length increased (72%), and those whose story length did not increase (28%). Sean and Rachel were chosen from the former group. Matt and Naji were chosen from the later group. The children profiled purposefully overrepresent those whose story length did not increase in order to take a closer look at why langauge games do not work for all children.

Sean

Sean began the school year just shy of his forth birthday. Both of Sean's parents are Italian-American. In January Sean's mother gave birth to his first sibling, a boy. Sean's father has a degree in marine biology, and loved telling his son stories about various sea creatures.

Sean was an enthusiastic participant both in large and small group activities: sharing his opinions in discussions, singing songs, and

eagerly listening to books and stories. At choice time Sean was drawn towards big blocks and dramatic play. Science observations were also compelling, and he could spend long periods watching the classroom gerbils. Sean was very invested in peer relationships. Within these relationships the issues of power and strength were central.

Sean's interactions with teachers during the storyteller program are best described as cooperative. On his day to tell a story Sean would begin to make his book or practice with puppets independently, and then seek out a teacher in order to receive assistance in his child-teacher conference. During conferences Sean was receptive to ideas for his stories. These conferences laid the groundwork for collaboration during his performances. Such collaboration included teacher reminders about the medium of storytelling chosen (early in the program), and receptivity to prompts in organizing complex plot twists (later in the program). Sean often initiated such collaboration. For example, in preparing for one performance Sean requested that I read his dictated story as he acted out the action with props. We practiced this during his conference, and then jointly performed at story time. Sean was an enthusiastic participant in the storyteller program. His participation rate was 100%.

Sean's case study is based on thirteen story performances: seven from the first half and six from the last half of the program. The texts of Sean's stories reveal a teller who entered the program with strong storytelling skills. These skills developed further during

the course of the program.

Sean told both short (4 clauses) and long (57 clauses) stories. His average story length was 16 clauses. The average length grew during the program, increasing by 7 clauses. The increase occurred in all media that Sean told stories.[6] By far Sean's most expansive stories were his puppet performances (see table one).

Table One: Average Length of Sean's Stories

	all stories	dictated stories	oral telling with books	puppets
first half	13.0	7.0	7.0	28.5
last half	20.0	11.5	14.0	57.0
overall	16.0	10.0	9.0	38.0

Sean's used abstracts to title his stories, and codas to signal his stories' conclusions. While he used no abstracts during the first half, Sean used abstracts in 57% his stories during the last half of the program. His use of codas increased marginally during the program (see table two). Sean did not provide much orientative information in his stories. Only 6% of clauses in his stories contained any orientative information, and almost half of his stories had no orientation clauses what so ever. Over the course of the program, Sean did begin to supply more orientative information (see table two).

---

[6] Children chose the medium with which they told their stories. Choices included: **dictation** (where a child would tell their stories to a teacher at the child-teacher conference and the teacher would then read the story during story time); **oral tellings; oral tellings with books** (where a child would make book and then "read" it at story time); and **puppets**. Occasionally, children would combine media.

Table Two: Microstructure of Sean's Stories

	stories with abstracts	stories with codas	stories with orientation	clauses with orientation
first half	0.0%	50.0%	28.0%	3.0%
last half	57.0%	57.0%	83.0%	8.0%
overall	27.0%	53.0%	53.0%	6.0%

Sean began the year with a relatively good command of sequencing. As the year went on Sean solidified his control over sequencing, as seen in the dropping out of leap frog narratives. The last half of the program also saw Sean take a first step in moving past the narrative high point, producing a classic narrative (see table three).

Table Three: Macrostructural Classification of Sean's Stories

first half:	2 one event narratives 1 two event narrative 1 leap frog 1 chronology 1 ending-at-the-high-point
last half:	5 chronologies 1classic

The change in Sean's storytelling abilities is further illustrated by two of his puppet performances. These two lengthy stories do not fit easily into high point or concept analysis categories. They are displayed below through the use of stanza analysis. The story from January began:

PART ONE: INTRODUCING THE CAST
Stanza One: Frog

One day the frog woke up
Then he ate breakfast

Stanza Two: Ari Tiger

Then he went and met Ari Tiger
Ari Tiger said "what are you doing frog, down there?"
And then he bounced them right in them

Stanza Three: Alligator

And then the alligator came and said "do you want to go for a picnic today?"
"Sorry, we can't. We fell in the hole."
And then he (alligator) fell down again.

Stanza Four: Ari Tiger (reprise)

And then Ari Tiger hopped up and bounced out right up into a mud puddle

PART TWO: FROG AND ARI TIGER INTERACT

Stanza Five: Frog and Ari Tiger converse

And then the frog came and said "I got out so I'll bounced you right into a mud puddle."
And Ari Tiger. And Ari Tiger said "so. I you're down there. I'll play. I'll go and play
And then when your out I'll play with you too."

Stanza Six: Frog's question

But then, but then when he was walking away he said
The frog said "what are you walking away?"
(Ari Tiger said) "We're just out."

Stanza Seven: Frog throws Ari Tiger

And then. But then he (Ari Tiger) didn't know that the frog w a s hanging on to his tail
And then he swinged them
And throwed him over there
He throwed him in the mud puddle

PART THREE: THE MUD PUDDLE

Stanza Eight: Ari Tiger is frozen in the mud

Then the mud puddle became ice
And the [unintelligible] became mush
Because he got frozen inside there
Yea, Ari Tiger did

Stanza Nine: Frog throws Ari Tiger in the mud

But then the frog bitted it open
And then swinged it around and threw him down in the mud puddle

PART FOUR: CONFLICT

Stanza Ten: Alligator bites Ari Tiger

But then when it was to late
The alligator already bitted his tail
And swung him over there

Stanza Eleven: Frog and Ari Tiger fight

And then the frog said "I'll bounce you and go out to play"
(Ari Tiger said) "Hay stop that
Stop that
Stop that

Ahhh."

Stanza Twelve: Alligator and Ari Tiger fight

And then Ari Tiger was straight
But then he bounced undone
And creeped him out
(The Alligator said) "Hay, stop doing that
Well, I feel you do that. I'll do that to you. Ahhh."
Hay."

And that's the end of the story.

The story from May began:

PART ONE: EVERYONE DIES OR "THE TROUBLE"

Stanza 1: Frog dies

One time the frog woke up
He ate breakfast
He went down
And got dead

Stanza 2: Ari Tiger dies

And then Ari Tiger came
But he was still alive
And he walked
And he fell
And he got dead

Stanza 3: Horsey Window almost dies

And then Horsey window came
He fell in the hole
But when he fell in the hole he was still standing up cause he didn't fall

Stanza 4: Horsey Window does die

And then. Then Horsey Window. The alligator tried to eat Ari Tiger's. Horsey Window's ear
The alligator. The alligator. And, and, but he couldn't
And then he (alligator) dropped him (Horsy Window) down dead

Stanza 5: Alligator dies

Then he (alligator) was left all alone
And the hole was closing up
And he walked down
But there was still a little crack
And he fell down in it
And got dead

PART TWO: THE REALIZATION

Stanza 6: By alligator

And then. But then, but then he was got alive again
He said "something's going strange around here
Every time I keep falling we get dead. So"

Stanza 7: By Ari Tiger

And then Ari Tiger said the same thing
"So, I should figure out"

PART THREE: THE DOLDRUMS

Stanza 8: Horsey Window's confusion

But Horsey Window didn't know what to do
And he got dizzy
And he fell to the ground

Stanza 9: Frog Sleeps

And then the frog came
And he went home to sleep cause he was tired

Stanza 10: Horsey Window's problem's continue

And then Horsey Window got dizzy again
But, but he, but she didn't get tied up
At least her ears covered one of her eyes
And then, and then the fur
And then her eyes fell down
And she couldn't see
And she fell into the hole again
But then she clucked
But (Horsy Window said) "hay, where's"
It was opening up
"Hay, I'm walking on sea
Yicks"
Splash

Stanza 11: Brush with the sea

But a fish tried to eat Horsey Window's ear because she was down by the sea
She went inside the house to sleep because she was so tired from that rescue

Stanza 12: Frog interlude

And then. And then. And then, then the frog, jump, jump, jump, jump
But he fell inside his house

PART FOUR: THE TROUBLE (REPRISE)

Stanza 13: Frog explains the trouble

And then. The strange thing was
(The frog said) "I figured it out
The sea is cracking open
We always fall in the sea

The fish always try to eat our eyes or our ears
And that is the trouble"

Stanza 14: The trouble continues

And then, and then all of them got dead again
And the fish ate them all
Yea, the fish ate them all

There are two important differences between Sean's earlier and latter puppet performances. First, the stanzas in the latter performance are more fully developed. Consider the first six stanzas in the May performance. They all begin by introducing a character, take the character through some actions, and then move the character off stage. Compare this to the first three stanzas of the January performance where characters are also introduced. These stanzas lack the coherent organization and parallel structure found in the May performance. By May Sean seems to have gained mastery of the stanza, using variation within a set structure to build his performance.

A second change, on a grand organizational level, is that Sean's May performance moves forward. In part one he introduces the trouble. In part two there is the realization. In part four the trouble is explained and continues. The parts are linked to each other and to a central plot line. This is not to say that all of Sean's May performance fits together as a unified whole. Part three is labeled "The Doldrums" because it does not seem to go anywhere. As a section, it is reminiscent of all of the January performance. True, in the January performance the mud puddle keeps cropping up, but its various appearances are not explicitly linked. In the earlier story events happen, but are not tied together.

Rachel

Rachel was four years and three months old when she began school in September. Rachel's parents are both professionals. Her mother is Italian-American and her father is Jewish-American. Rachel has an older sister who was in the first grade.

Rachel was a full participant in school. She quickly adjusted to the classroom routine, and would eagerly race into school each morning. Rachel engaged in a wide range of activities; from art to dramatic play. Rachel's art work was full of colors and patterns, and she relished the tactile experiences of pasting and figure paint. Her dramatic play was at times solitary and at times social. During social play Rachel proved a skilled negotiator, often mediating the competing play agendas of her peers. At large group meetings Rachel enjoyed participating in collective activities (e.g., singing, movement games), but would rarely participate in individual activities (e.g., discussions).

Rachel's interactions with teachers in the storyteller program are best characterized as cooperative. Rachel worked together with teachers in the program with little explicit instruction, and with a shared understanding of each parties's responsiblities in producing Rachel's stories. Rachel preferred dictated stories. Early in the program she began bringing several drawings taped together as a book to her child-teacher conferences. She would then, with little prompting, narrate a story to match the pictures. The teachers acted as scribes. During her performances a teacher would read Rachel's books. As her stories were read Rachel would sit in front of the

class smiling, turning pages as requested by the teacher. Rachel's participation rate in the storyteller program was a respectable 86%.

Rachel's case study is based on seven stories: four from the first half and three from the last half of the program. All of the stories in the present sample were dictated. Rachel began the program telling short but comprehensible stories. As the year progressed she told longer and more complex stories.

Rachel's stories were relatively short, ranging from 4 to 15 clauses. The average length was 7 clauses. The length of the stories showed a marked expansion over the course of the program, increasing on average 11 clauses (see table five).

Table Five: Average Length of Rachel's Stories

first half	4.0
last half	13.0
overall	7.0

During the first half the program Rachel used no abstracts or codas. Only in the last half of the program did these appendages appear (see table six). Rachel's abstracts were short titles (e.g., "The Farm"), and codas were straight forward conclusions (e.g., "the end"). Rachel provided more orientation in her latter stories. During the first half of the program orientation appeared in 75% of the stories. By the last half of the program all stories had some orientation. The percentage of orientative clauses showed a parallel trend, almost doubling during the last half of the program (see table six).

Table Six: Microstructure of Rachel's Stories

	stories with abstract	stories with coda	stories with orientation	clauses with orientation
first half	0%	0%	75%	19%
last half	66%	66%	100%	35%
overall	29%	29%	86%	30%

On a macrostructural level, Rachel began the program telling clear stories with only a few events (see table seven).

Table Seven: High Point Classification of Rachel's Stories

first half:	1 one event narrative 2 two event narrative 1 three event narrative
last half:	1 leap frog 2 chronologies

The following story, told in December, was typical in its brevity and comprehensibility:

One day there was a little girl
And she was playing outside
She saw a spider
She wasn't scared

By the last half of the program Rachel demonstrated the ability to tell a story with more events (see table three). Organizationally, events in the stories were linked to proceeding events, but were not tied to a central core or point. Such was the case in a story told in March:

The farm
One day there was a cowboy boy and a cowboy girl
And then they went to a new farm
But the cowboy horses died
So they take a rest
The cowboy girl got up
And put some lip stick on
And then she saw a star on the lip stick
She turned into a ballerina with a wand with a unicorn
And the Fabulous Fours didn't know her
But they did actually
They live in Boston

And go to the school: Eliot-Pearson Preschool

In both parts of the program Rachel was able to string together events, and evaluate some of these events. As the year progressed Rachel was able to add more events to her story. However, despite the ability to evaluate situations (e.g., "She wasn't scared"; "and the Fabulous Fours didn't know her") Rachel's stories did not build towards one cumulating event or narrative high point.

Matt

Matt turned four during the first month of school. His parents are both professionals. Matt's family is of German ancestry, but has lived in America for many generations. Matt is a middle child. He has a gifted seven-year-old sister and an energetic two-year-old brother.

Matt is a very creative child with an abundance of energy and wide range of interests. In his daily trips to the art area Matt spent extended periods of time using collage materials and paint to create various flying machines and assundary vehicles. Dramatic play was also a frequent choice where Matt, because of his creativity and verbal skills, was a leader in play. However, despite (or perhaps because of) his creativity Matt was constantly emeshed in struggles with his teachers and peers. Disputes with teachers over classroom routines (e.g., cleanup time) were a regular occurrence. Disagreements with peers (e.g., regarding roles in dramatic play) were frequent and often produced tears.

Matt interactions with teachers during the storyteller program, while at times amicable, were filled with conflict. Conflict

permeated all aspects of the program. For example, Matt bristled over the restriction that a child could only tell one story a week. Long after the other children had accepted this limitation, Matt would lobby for special dispensation. Further, Matt was reluctant to come to the weekly storyteller workshops where children signed up to tell a story. As a result, Matt's participation rate was 71%, ranking him 14th among the class' 17 children. On the occasions when Matt signed up to tell a story, the results were unpredictable. For example, at times Matt initiated his child-teacher conferences while at other times he was extremely reluctant to attend. Once the conferences began Matt often resisted talking about that day's performance, preferring to discuss grandiose schemes instead (e.g., the sequel to the story he was about to tell). Matt's story performances were similarly unpredictable. Matt was an exuberant teller: standing, jumping, and falling over as he spun his tales. At times Matt's energy level seemed like it was about to escalate out of control. As a result, his performances were punctuated by my cautions regarding behavior. Further, Matt was often very reluctant to end his performances. Thus Matt received frequent requests (and then directives) to conclude his stories. Even after his stories were completed Matt would remain in front of the class, requiring a teacher to cajole or coerce him off stage.

Matt's case study is based on ten stories, six from the first half and four from the last half of the program. From these stories it is clear that Matt is a gifted storyteller. His stories are innovative and imaginative. As a teller Matt's skills were unequaled among his

peers. His command over gesture and voice, along with his sense of timing and drama, are outstanding. For example, Matt begun one performance by telling his audience "I have a secret. Come closer." As fifteen spell bound children gathered around him in a tight circle Matt began his story. Despite his talents, Matt's storytelling capabilities did not seem to change over the course of the program.

The length of Matt's stories ranged from 5 to 50 clauses, with a relatively long average of 17.5 clauses. There was a small (2.5 clause) increase in the length of Matt's stories from beginning to end. However, this statistic obscures the fact that in two media (puppets and dictated stories) story length actually decreased (see table eight). Matt's longest stories involved puppets.

Table Eight: Average Length of Matt's Story Performance

	all stories	dictated	telling with book	puppets	oral telling and puppets
first half	16.5	15.0	5.0	33.0	-
last half	19.0	7.5	-	11.0	50.0
overall	17.5	13.0	5.0	22.0	50.0

Matt used abstracts both to name his stories and announce their importance (e.g., "The Ghost Busters get in trouble. Its a very important story."). Codas were used to mark endings (e.g., "And that's the end of this part of the story"). Matt used more abstracts and coda in the last half of the program (see table nine). Matt's use of orientation showed an opposite movement, with far less orientation appearing in the last half of the program (see table nine). All of Matt's stories during the first part of the program contained some orientation. Only a quarter of his stories in the last part of the program provided any specifically orientative

information.

Table Nine: Microstructure of Matt's Stories

	stories with abstracts	stories with codas	stories with orientation	clauses with orientation
first half	17.0%	50.0%	100.0%	19.0%
last half	75.0%	75.0%	25.0%	1.0%
overall	40.0%	60.0%	70.0%	12.5%

Matt began the program with a good command over sequencing. Such was the case in a story told in January, where Matt related a series of six temporally ordered events (along with some evaluation):

One day the globe was taking a walk to Italy
Then he found a opera starting
And he was impressed
I know he was impressed
And he went to the opera
And he was going to Massachusetts and the North Pole
He was going to the South Pole too
And he was going to Russia and Greenland

Matt also entered the program with the ability to tell a classic narrative. Interestingly, Matt would often combine his well formed stories with what is best described as "verbal jamming" (word play that resembles stream of conscious poetry). This verbal jamming dramatically increased the length of Matt's stories. For example, in January Matt begin his performance by telling a classic narrative:

When I was going on a walk I saw some creatures from outer space
They were totally blue
They broke my leg
And when they broke my leg I had to go to the doctors
They gave me a new leg
And put my old leg in the trash
I needed two new hands
When I got two new hands I jumped for joy
And jumped for joy
And whacked around all the toys

Matt then continued with the following verbal jamming:

I love you mommy

I love you daddy
Do you have a computer at your school? Yes
Can you write on a computer? Yes
Can you draw on a computer? Yes
Can you read on a computer? Yes
Can you talk like a computer? Yes
Can you walk like a giraffe? Yes
Can you grow like a plant? Yes
Will you rise like the sky?
Yes, because you can rise
And the sky can rise
Why can you rise like the sky?
Because you can put up your hands like the sky and turn around
Why do you put up your hands and turn
Because you are a person
Why are you a person
Because you have two legs and eyes and ears and a nose

Regarding change in macrostructure over the course of the program, Matt's development seems to have stagnated. In the first half Matt produced narratives with high points. In the last half, while there are no longer any two or three event narratives, all Matt's stories are chronologies (see table ten).

Table Ten: High Point Classification of Matt's Stories

First half:	1 two event narrative 1 three event narrative 1 chronology 1 end-at-the-high-point 1 classic
Second half:	4 chronologies

Naji

Four and a half in September, Naji was the second oldest child in the class. Naji's parents, emigres from India, are both biologists. In January Naji's mother gave birth to a baby girl. Naji's parents told their son frequent tales about life in India.

This was Naji's first school experience. Throughout the year he struggled to adjust to the behavioral expectations of the classroom,

and to fit into the peer culture. At the beginning of the year Naji seemed baffled by the classroom rules governing the use of materials (e.g., conventions restricting the use of art materials to the art area). Likewise, Naji initially had great difficulty initiating and maintaining play with his peers. Over the course of the year Naji made important strides aculturating to the environment. He learned classroom expectations and developing skills which facilitated his interactions with peers, something he desperately wanted to do. Indeed, the social agenda was Naji's primary concern, and it dictated his choices of activities. In following potential playmates to various areas of the room, Naji participated in some sophisticated dramatic play, and took part in numerous art projects.

Naji's interactions with teachers during the storyteller program were cordial (by cordial I want to convey a sense of politeness or formality that accompanies interactions between individuals that do not fully know or understand each other). Though at times I felt Naji and I were working together cooperatively, I often had the sense that our interactions were puzzling to both parties involved. Our interactions concerning the length of Naji's stories capture what I mean by cordial. During his child-teacher conferences Naji would rehearse his stories. Concerned about the extensive length of the stories, I generally provided Naji with strategies for bringing the stories to orderly conclusions. Naji seemed unsure about my suggestions, but did not disagree. During his performances I often had difficulty following what seemed to me Naji's long, rambling stories. After several minutes of telling I would ask Naji to bring

his stories to an end. On one such occasion Naji looked at me helplessly and asked "tell me how to end." I gave Naji words to end his story which he repeated verbatim. Naji was polite in his acceptance of my limits on his stories, but did not seem understanding how to end his stories in such a truncated way. Naji was an eager storyteller. His participation rate was 100%.

Naji's case study is based on five stories: two from the first half and three from the last half of the program. During his performances Naji was intent on connecting with his audience. Story lines and vocal qualities that emphasized humor, suspense, and excitement were his vehicles to create the connection. The small number of stories makes it difficult to chart Naji's progress during the program. The difficulty is compounded by the fact that Naji's stories to not readily conform to high point analysis. My sense is that Naji was not making progress with preexisting notions of storytelling, but learning a new way to tell stories. This claim accounts for the uneven development of Naji's story structure, and helps explain some interesting features of his stories presented below.

The average length of Naji's stories (20 clauses) was the longest of the 17 children. Naji's average story length remained constant throughout the program. The longest story Naji told was a puppet performance (see table eleven).

Table Eleven: Average Length of Naji's Stories

	all stories	oral tellings	tellings with books	dictation	puppets
first half	20.0	-	25.0	12.0	27.0
last half	20.0	23.0	-	13.0	-
overall	20.0	23.0	25.0	12.5	27.0

The small number of stories in this case study places conclusions about change over time on unsure ground. Given that caution, Naji microstructure showed both development and regression over the course of the program. The abstracts and codas in Naji's stories were simple titles and endings. There were fewer abstracts in the last half of the program. The percentage of codas remained constant. The amount of orientation increased over the program. While all of Naji's stories included some orientation, the percentage of clauses with orientative information increased from 10% to 23% (see table twelve).

Table Twelve: Microstructure of Naji's Stories

	stories with abstracts	stories with codas	stories with orientation	clauses with orientation
first half	50.0%	100.0%	100.0%	10.0%
last half	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	23.0%
overall	20.0%	100.0%	100.0%	18.0%

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the microstructure of Naji's stories was its variability among stories. For example, the percentage of action clauses ranged from a high 92% to a low of 40%. Similarly, the percentage of orientative clauses ranged from 36% to 4%, and evaluative clauses ranged from 40% to 0%.

Regarding macrostructure, Naji began the program with difficulties structuring a story that conformed to mainstream American expectations. Specifically, Naji had difficulty sequencing story

events. While at times Naji was able to construct stories with temporally ordered events, his sequencing problem persisted throughout the program. However, Naji also acquired several mainstream conventions for structuring stories during the course of the program.

High point analysis provides a sense of Naji's sequencing difficulties. Most of Naji's stories (in both halves of the program) were rated as leap frogs because they failed to maintain a coherent temporal order of events (see table thirteen). A leap frog story from January illustrates Naji's sequencing difficulties (note that we were told that the Care Bears were safe before we were told that they were being sought be their nemesises Shirky and Feeky):

Care Bears
Once upon a time there was Care Bears and doggies and cats
And then once upon a time the Care Bears were in his house
And then once upon a time the Care Bears just was playing with his cats and dogs
And the Care Bears was playing with the ponies
Jack Bear was playing with the Pink Bear
And then the pony came again
And said "hello Care Bears"
The Care Bears said "how are you?"
The Care Bears were safe
Shriky and Feeky were looking for the Care Bears
The end

A story from April is a further example of Naji's leap frogging (note the unexpected appearance of Flounder, a character from the Disney movie "The Little Mermaid"):

One day I went to school with mommy and daddy
And then at school I played with Kevin
And then Flounder popped out
And he was swimming in the water
And when Kevin saw Tavio and Zack we catched them in fire
At morning time we got some art
And we saw daddy
We got three Ninja Turtles

Then I had lunch
Went to bed
I went to Brown Small Group
And played tape
The end

Naji's lack of command over sequencing meant that his stories were confusing to children and teachers alike.

Table Thirteen: High Point Rating of Naji's Stories

First half:	1 Leap Frog 1 Chronology
Second Half:	2 Leap Frogs 1 Chronology

Despite his difficulties, Naji incorporated several mainstream conventions for organizing his stories. This is most apparent in the idiosyncratic aspects of the adult story performances that appeared in Naji's stories. One example of such incorporation is in ritualized openings. The puppets stories I told often began with a ritualized opening where the main character (Ari Tiger) ate a hardy oatmeal breakfast. Naji explored this openings in a puppet performance told in December. Displaying the story through stanza analysis makes it clear how Naji played with the idea of eating oatmeal: beginning with the experience, marveling at the experience, and then returning to the experience at the end of his story:

PART ONE: ARI TIGER
Stanza One: Waking up

One day Ari Tiger woke up
And went "ahhh"

Stanza Two: Oatmeal

Then he ate oatmeal
And then he ate oatmeal
And then he ate oatmeal!
And then he ate oatmeal!

PART TWO: THE ALLIGATOR
Stanza Three: Alligator and Ari Tiger Meet

And then who was swimming in the water?
Alligator
[Ari Tiger said] "want to play with me?"
[Alligator said] "I just say to you I can't"
[Ari Tiger said] "Why?"
[Alligator said] "I have to get some lollipops"

Stanza Four: Candy

And then ran to the store
Everybody was there
An alligator in the store!
And then run back
And got lollipops
And then they had Teddy Bear picnic
And then the alligator ate all the candy

PART THREE: ARI TIGER (REPRISE)
Stanza Five: Going Back Home

And then he [Ari Tiger] went up
And then he did like this
He went back home

Stanza Six: Oatmeal Again

And then he ate oatmeal again
Not again!
He always had oatmeal for breakfast
And then that's the end

A second idiosyncratic storytelling device which Naji appropriated was the technique of structuring a story around the inclusion of all the children in the group. My stories often featured this devise, going around the circle and either including each child in the story's plot, or asking each child to verbally participate in the story. Naji utilized this convention in a performance in May to produce, to my ears, a very coherent story:

One day Michelangelo was walking
And then he splashed into the swimming pool
And the Leonardo said he splashed into the swimming pool
Then Raphael said he splashed in the swimming pool
Then Donitello he splashed in the swimming pool
And then all of them are splashing
they are swim, swim, swimmed
And then they saw me

And I splashed into the water
And then Whitney come and he splashed into the water
And then Kevin came and he splashed into the water
And then Billy came; he splashed in the water
And then Kathleen come and he splashed in the water
And then Mary come; he splashed in the water
And then Sean come; he splashed into the water
And then Clara came; he splashed in the water
And then Matt came; he splashed in the water
And then Zack came; he splashed in the water
And then Sophia came; he splashed in the water
She, and then she I mean, he
Rachel went splashing into the water
And then Rose did splashed into the water
And then all them swimmed, swimmed, swimmed
And they got back in the pipe
And then they got, and then when the turtle, and they they rided on the bus
But Shreder came. Shreder just comes and then
And then, and then when he splashed
Michelangelo splashed him in the water
A dolphin came diving under the water
The end.

PART THREE: STRUCTURING AND IMPLEMENTING LANGUAGE GAMES

Part Three presents conclusions regarding the structuring and implementing of langauge games. Implementing language games is discussed first. I draw from the case studies to illuminate the teacher's role in playing language games. Structuring langague games is discussed next. I utilize data from the case studies and from the experiences of the entire class to suggest several important rules for language games.

Implementing Language Games

A primary purpose of the present paper is to explore ways of making language games work for all children. Towards this end the present section examines the teacher's role in implementing language games. The examination takes the form of summaries which review the associations between child-teacher interactions and narrative

development found in the four case studies. These associations are conceptualized through the framework of the sociocultural perspective.

In particular, two constructs of the sociocultural perspective are used to guide conclusions: intersubjectivity and cultural variations in cognitive activities. Intersubjectivity is used to explain Sean's success and Matt's difficulties in the storyteller program. Variations in cognitive activities is envoked in examining Rachel and Naji's experiences with the language game.

Intersubjectivity

The storyteller program involved extensive joint problem solving. The problem at hand was telling better stories. A framework for generating solutions was provided by the programs routines, planning conferences, and story performances. However, finding solutions was not guarented. Individual children's learning was dependent on the establishment of intersubjectivity. The importance of teachers' forging a common focus with children is illustrated by the cases on Sean and Matt.

Recall that Sean's interactions with the teachers during the storyteller program were cooperative, and his narrative development improved in all areas analyzed. Intersubjectivity between Sean and myself helps explain the association between cooperative interactions and improved storytelling capabilities.

The storyteller program's weekly cycle provided Sean a routine which organized his interaction with the teachers. Because of the routine Sean knew what to expect, and what was expected of him. For

example, he knew when I would be available for assistance. Sean accepted the structure, looking forward to his opportunity to tell stories.

Sean's child-teacher conferences provided a venue for Sean and I to begin working together in creating stories. In these conferences I was able to help Sean plan his stories by challenging him to tell clearer stories, and constraining options which would have led to incoherent narratives. Further, the conferences created a common understanding about Sean's stories from which I could guide his performances.

An example of such guidance occurred in the May puppet performance displayed in Sean's case study. At the child-teacher conference Sean practiced with puppets. There I learned that Sean wanted to tell a story were something strange would happened to the puppets, and then be identified. After listening to his story I commented that it was a "mystery", and that I looked forward to the performance. During the performance Sean set up the mystery. However, the complexity of the plot line along with the additional burden of performing to a large audience resulted in Sean being unable to complete the story as practiced. The story got lost in what is labeled in his case study "The Doldrums." I was able to help Sean by reminding him about the story plot. I asked Sean "what was the strange thing that was going on?" Sean responded by bringing the story back to its original focus.

The example represents what many of Sean's performances were: social constructions of stories. Collaboration allowed Sean to tell

tales he would not have been able to tell alone. In theory these interactions aided Sean in developing narrative structure as he internalized the sense of plot embedded in my questions. All of this was possible because a common focus on storytelling had been established.

An opposite situation occured with Matt. Matt's interactions with teachers in the storyteller program were filled with conflict, and he did not show development in his storytelling capabilities. The failure to establish intersubjectivity helps explain the atrophy in Matt's narrative development.

I failed to establish intersubjectivity with Matt in the storyteller program. We did not work together as he told his stories. As detailed in his case study, conflict permeated all parts of the program. The routines of the program were a source of contention rather than a basis for participation. Conferences failed to provide the information I needed to guide Matt's performances. During the performances, while I wanted Matt to tell more coherent stories, he wanted to hold the floor for as long as possible. The result was conflict.

Our struggle over story length is emblematic of how conflict subverted intersubjectivity. During the year, as I grew aware of what I perceived as Matt's games to maintain the floor, I issued more directives to Matt to end his stories. Matt responded with more innovative ways to prolong his telling. For example, he would feign endings and then continue telling, or claim there was "just one more thing" to tell. More and more energy was directed towards

negotiating the stories' conclusions. As a result, I did not provide Matt any assistance in telling better stories. For his part, Matt may have been devoting more thought to maintaining the floor than to organizing his stories.

Reflecting back, I wonder how I could have better meshed our agendas, or structured Matt's participation to diminish our conflict. Perhaps making the rules explicit, such as giving Matt a set amount of time for his performances, would have been helpful. In this vain, the use of a timer to monitor story length may have diffused some of the conflict, taking the onus of ending Matt's stories off me and putting it on a neutral object. However, the difficulties Matt and I experienced in the storyteller program were issues we faced throughout the classroom. Despite Matt's advanced storytelling skills, it would have remained difficult to establish intersubjectivity in the storytelling program without addressing the larger classroom issues.

Cultural Variations in Cognitive Activities

Rachel and Naji's experiences in the storyteller program were very different. Cultural variations in cognitive activities, specifically cultural differences in storytelling style, help explain how Rachel and Naji interacted with teachers and told stories during the storyteller program.

Rachel's interactions with the teachers in the storyteller program were cooperative, and her storytelling capabilities showed improvement both on the microstructural and macrostructural level. It is noteworthy that Rachel's interactions in the storyteller

program mirrored her general adjustment to school, and this symmetry is discussed next.

Rachel understood how to participate in the storyteller program. She used the routines of the program to structure her participation, and she and I worked well together in producing her dictated stories. This ease of participation was also seen in school in general. Rachel understood the classroom structure, and fully participated in school activities. My hunch is that Rachel's success in the language game went hand in hand with her general success in school. Speculating further, Rachel's success in school seems tied to her experiences at home. Stated in other words, the culture of Rachel's home and the culture at school matched well. Similarities in how stories were told and how activities were organized allowed Rachel to readily participate in school.

Rachel was a child who understood the language game without requiring extensive instruction. Her success was not predicated on extravigant efforts on the part of the teachers. This is a far cry from Naji's experiences.

As described above, Naji's interactions with teachers during the storyteller program were cordial. The development of Naji's storytelling capabilities were difficult to assess. Throughout the program Naji had difficulty sequencing events. However, Naji did appropriate some techniques for organizing his stories. It is very possible that Naji was learning a new style of storytelling rather than making progress in a preexisting system. Reference to cultural variations in cognitive functioning helps explain the association

between Naji interactions with teachers and the development of his storytelling capabilities.

My assertion that Naji was learning a new storytelling style is premised on the assumption that there are differences between Indian and mainstream American styles of storytelling (and that Naji was learning the American style in school). Given that differences have been found in the storytelling styles of groups living in the U.S., it is not unlikely that differences exist between Indian and American culture. This assumption is supported by the stylistic differences between American and Indian literacture. The assertion is also supported by the manner in which Naji's father told stories; long, meandering tales which, to mainstream American ears, were difficult to understand.

The existence of cultural variations helps explain two aspects of Naji's stories. First it explains why Naji (a bright, articulate child) had such difficulty in making his stories comprehensible to mainstream American ears. If Naji was learning a new way of telling stories, his continued difficulty in sequencing is more understandable. Second, it explains why Naji, more than any other child, adapted idiosyncratic aspects of the adult performances. It was as if Naji heard the adult stories and thought: so this is how you tell stories around here.

Given the possibility of cultural variations between the school storytelling style and Naji's home storytelling style, I am left wondering about my dealings with Naji. Michaels (1991) writes about the "dismantling of narrative;" the destruction or suppression of

particular narrative styles that occurs in classrooms. I shutter at the possibility that I may have been guilty, by asking Naji to bring his stories to tidy conclusions, of derailing his narrative style. I wonder how I could have respected Naji's home storytelling style while teaching him the mainstream American style.

I am certainly not alone in facing this problem. All teachers who work with children with narrative styles different from their own face the dilemma of: 1) valuing a variety of storytelling styles; and 2) teaching the mainstream style necessary for school success. The seriousness of the issue is highlighted by the reality of contemporary American society where ways of telling are associated with privileged classes and access to power (Delpit, 1988). Narrative skills are particularly important because of their association with literacy and school success (Snow, 1989). Sensitivity to cultural variation, while providing all children the skills necessary for success in mainstream culture, is a very difficult task. It is the most perplexing issue facing teachers implementing language games.

Structuring Language Games

The present section presents insights on what logistics promoted children's engagement with, and development within, the storyteller program. These insights highlight the importance of: adult performances; puppets; and multiple entry points into language games.

Adult Performances

All 17 children in the class loved listening to stories, and from the begining of the year eagerly anticipated the adult story

performances. I am convinced that the adult performances increased children's disposition to participate in the storyteller program. Further, my sense is that observing adult performances improved some children's storytelling capabilities.

Regarding the disposition to participate, note Sean and Naji's 100% participation rate. Sean and Naji maintained their enthusiasm over a five month period. In participating in the program, and attending the storyteller workshops, they chose to forgo coveted time with block and other popular activities. Sean and Naji were not alone in their excitement about the program. Eight children had 100% participation rates. The overall participation rate averaged 89%, and was as high at the beginning of the program as at the end. Based on my previous experiences with four-year-olds, such prolonged engagement is truly extraordinary.

Regarding improved competencies, the sociocultural perspective suggest that children learn from viewing mature models of a task. Two pieces of evidence from the case studies suggest that this occurred in the storyteller program. First, some children clearly incorporated some of my storytelling conventions into their storytelling repitore. Recall Naji's incorporation of the ritualized "oatmeal for breakfast" beginning into his puppet performances. Sean also appropriated the breakfast opening into his performances. Second, the puppet performances observed during the storyteller program were often of a much higher quality than I have found in previous experiences (those who have worked with four-year-olds can judge for themselves based on the examples provided in the

case studies). In the past, I found that while children were initially enthusiastic about using puppets, they lacked the skills to sustain play. Under these circumstances performances were short and disorganized, and children soon lost interest in the puppets. While there is no control group to compare puppet performances, it does seem that the children benefitted from observations of adult models as they played the language game.

Puppets!

A goal of preschool language games is to get and keep children talking. Puppets seem to serve this purpose well. Sean, Matt, and Jay all told their longest stories with puppets. The differences in length with other media is substantial (see table fourteen). In fact, of the 13 children who used puppets during the program, 10 told their longest stories in this medium.

Table Fourteen: Average Length of All Stories Compared To Average Length of Puppet Stories

	All Stories	Puppet Stories
Matt	17.5	31.0
Naji	20.0	27.0
Sean	16.0	38.0

Further, it appears puppets can aid children in the telling of more complex stories. The change in Sean's puppet performances between January and May is an example of the narrative development (in this case on an organizational level) that puppetry can facilitate.

The power of puppets in helping young children tell stories may be attributable to several factors. First, by their physical presence puppets free tellers from certain linguistics demands. Tellers do

not have to specify voice to make clear who is speaking, but only have to hold up a puppet and speak. In the same way the need for specificity in pronoun use, which poses problems for many young children, is also demished. A review of Sean's puppet performances illustrate both points. Second, puppets (because of the characteristics associated with individual puppets or simply because they are there) may inspire additional talk. Recall Sean's puppet story from May where four puppets (all those available) met untimely ends. Perhaps if there would have been more puppets there would have been more untimely ends, and an even longer story. What ever the explanation, puppets seem to help children to tell longer, more complex stories.

Multiple Entry Points

An important feature of the storyteller program is that it made available a variety of media in which to tell stories. Children could choose to dictate their stories, use puppets, or make books. Such variety facilitated the participation of children with differing interests and abilities.

For example, if media requiring performances had been the only options, some children would have been disenfranchised from the program. Dictated stories provided an alternative to children reluctant to speak in front of the group. Such was the case with Rachel. Shy about addressing large numbers of people, the option to participate in a less public manner allowed her to take part in the program. Rachel was one of two children who choose to dictate the bulk of their stories.

However, if dictation had been the only option, other children would have been excluded. Mary, a child with Down's Syndrome and limited verbal abilities, is a case in point. The availability of puppets, which allowed for storytelling less tied to verbal aptitude, facilitated her participation in the program. In fact, Mary was an enthusiastic performer (her participation rate was 100%), and in the course of telling she was able to fashion some wonderful ideas. For example, during one performance Mary got up, went around the circle, and kissed each child with a puppet. Mary was thus able to connect with her entire audience. Several children latter emulated Mary's technique, incorporating it into their performances.

However, if puppet would have been the only option available other children would have been placed at a disadvantage. While puppets proved successful for many children, its utility was not universal. In two instances children told their shortest stories using puppets. Such examples could go on, but the point should be clear that multiple entry points into language games is important.

Ultimately, success in both structuring and implimenting language games revolves around **listening**. An emphasis on listening is particularly important in diverse classrooms where the varieity in storytelling styles may make it difficult to understand everyone's stories. In all classrooms teachers' difficulties in comphrending fleeting story texts are compounded by the responsiblity of monitering the behavior of a large group of children. Acknowledging

that everyone (including the teacher) needs to listen carefully in order to understand the stories, and that at first there may be difficulties because not everyone tells a story in the same way, can be a used introduction to langauge games. Further, for teachers willing to audio tape and then review children's stories, high point and stanza analysis provide frameworks for listening to stories more closely. I have certainly found these analyses insightful when reviewing my student's stories. I hope the present paper illustrates the value of careful listening to the stories young children tell when playing language games.

REFERENCES

Applebee, A. (1978). **The child's concept of story.** Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bakeman, R. & Gottman, J (1986). **Observing interaction: An introduction to sequential analysis.** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Blum-Kulka, S. & Snow, C. (1992). Developing autonomy for tellers, tale and telling in family narrative events. **Journal of Narrative and Life History**, 2(3), 187-217.

Delpit, L. (1988). The silenced dialogue: Power and pedagogy in educating other people's children. **Harvard Educational Review**, 58(3), 280-298.

Duckworth, E. (1987). **"The having of wonderful ideas" and other essays on teaching and learning.** New York: Teachers College Press.

Gee, J. (1989). Two styles of narrative construction and their linguistic and educational implications. **Discourse Processes**, 12(3), 287-308.

Gee, J. (1991). A linguistic approach to narrative. **Journal of Narrative and Life History**, 1(1), p.15-39.

Heath, S. (1983). **Ways with words: Language, life and work in communities and classrooms.** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hudson, J. & Shapiro, L. (1991). From knowing to telling: The development of children's scripts, stories, and personal narratives. In A. McCabe and C. Peterson (Eds.), **Developing narrative structure** (pp. 89-136). Hillside, NJ: Erlbaum.

Labov, W. (1972). **Language in the inner city.** Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Lytle, S. & Cochran-Smith, M. (1990). Learning from teacher research: A working topology. **Teachers College Record, 92**(1), 85-103.

McCabe, A. (1987). **Language games to play with your child.** New York: Fawcett Columbine.

McCabe, A. & Peterson, C. (1991). Getting the story: A longitudinal study of parental styles in eliciting narratives and developing narrative skill. In A. McCabe and C. Peterson (Eds.), **Developing narrative structure** (pp. 217-253). Hillside, NJ: Erlbaum.

Miller, P. & Moore, B. (1989). Narrative conjunctions of caregiver and child: A comparative perspective on socialization through stories. **Ethos**, 17(4), 428-449.

Minami, M. & McCabe, A. (1991a). Haiku as a discourse regulation device: A stanza analysis of Japanese children's personal narratives. **Language in Society**, 20, 577-599.

Minami, M. & McCabe, A. (1991b). **Rice balls versus bear hunts: Japanese and Caucasian family narrative patterns.** Paper presented at the Boston University Conference on Language Development, Boston, MA.

Peterson, C. & McCabe, A. (1983). **Developmental psycholinguistics: Three ways of looking at a child's narrative.** New York: Plenum.

Rodino, A., Gimbert, C., Perez, C. & McCabe, A. (1991, October). **"Getting your point across": Contrastive sequencing in low-income African-American and Latino children's personal narratives.** Paper presented at the Boston University Conference on Language Development, Boston, MA.

Rogoff, B. (1990). **Apprenticeship in thinking: Cognitive development in social context.** Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sachs, J. (1983). Talking about the there and then: The emergence of displaced reference in parent-child discourse. In K. Nelson (Ed.), **Children's language** (Vol. 4, pp. 1-28). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Snow, C. (1989). Understanding social interaction and language

acquisition; sentences are not enough. In M. Bornstein & J Bruner (Eds.), **Interaction in human development** (pp. 83- 1 0 3) . Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Scollon, R. & Scollon, S. (1981). **Narrative, literacy and face in interethnic communication.** Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Umiker-Sebeok, D. (1979). Preschool children's intraconversational narratives. **Journal of Child Language**, 6, 91-109.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). **Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.** Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wertsch, J. (1984). The zone of proximal development: Some conceptual issues. In B. Rogoff & J. Wertsch (Eds.), **Children's learning in the "Zone of Proximal Development"** (pp.7-18). New directions for child development, no 23. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Wertsch, J. (1991). **Voices of the mind: A sociocultural approach to mediated action.** Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wittgenstein, L. (1968). **Philosophical investigations** (G. Anscombe Trans.). (3rd ed.). New York: Macmillian.

APPENDIX I: CODING SYSTEMS

Microstrural Catagories (Labov, 1972; Peterson and McCabe, 1983)

Each story is broken into independent clauses. Clauses are then coded as either:

complicating actions (specific events which occur before the high point of the narrative);

resolutions (specific events which occur after the high point); **appendages** (abstracts, attention-getters, prologues, and codas which occur at the beginning or the end of the narrative); **orientation** (clauses that provide the setting or context of the narrative); or **evaluation** (clauses that tell the listener what to think about aspects of the narrative).

Highpoint Analysis (Peterson and McCabe, 1983)

Based on the placement of microstructural elements, narratives are defined as either:

classic (the canonical form of narrative in mainstream American culture, where the teller builds to a high point and then resolves the action);

end-at-the-high-point (where the teller builds towards a high point but does not resolve the action);

chronology (where the teller sequences events, but does not organize the story around a high point);

leap-frog (where the teller follows some sequence of events, but skips around and leaves out essential elements);

three event narratives (where only three events are sequenced);

two event narratives (where only two events are sequenced); or

miscellaneous and **disoriented** (where little organization is found).

Stanza Analysis (Gee, 1991)

There are various decision rules, based on syntactal, sematic, and prosodic features, for dividing stories into hierachical units of organization. These units are:

lines (a single idea unit whose ending is signaled, like an independent clause, by syntactical and prosodic markers. For example, pauses often mark the ending of a line);

stanza (made up of several lines which have a common focus. The cinematic metaphor of a scene is useful in grasping the boundries of a stanza, with a shift in camera focus signalling the begining of a new scene. Often such shifts are marked by reoccuring introductions. For example, Sean frequently used "and then" to mark

the begining of a stanza);

parts (consisting of one or more stanzas with a common theme. Such themes may involve individual episodes in a story made up of several events, or may involve the introduction of a conflict in stories focused on a single event.